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Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/189, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-third session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. Patterns and trends in the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran and recommendations to improve the implementation of the resolution are presented in the report.

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** The present report was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/189, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-third session. The report provides information on progress made in the implementation of the resolution and draws on observations made by the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and various United Nations entities. It also draws on information from State media and official sources of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and non-governmental organizations.

2. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has continued to engage with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations treaty bodies, and has responded to a number of communications from the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

3. Since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary-General, to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-seventh session (A/HRC/37/24), the Government has begun to implement an amendment to the drug-trafficking law which retroactively abolishes the mandatory death penalty for some drug-related offences. Notwithstanding the positive steps, following increasing widespread protests the human rights situation has been marked by an intensified crackdown on protesters, journalists and social media users. The application of the death penalty, including for juvenile offenders, has continued at a high rate. Reports of torture, arbitrary detention and trials that failed to adhere to international standards have been received, as has information on persistent discrimination against women and girls, as well as members of minority groups.

II. Overview of the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

A. Death penalty

Use of the death penalty

4. According to article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, States parties that have not yet abolished the death penalty should only impose it for the "most serious crimes", which has consistently been interpreted as meaning intentional killing.[1] Information received by OHCHR indicates that from January to May 2018, 78 persons were executed in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Secretary-General remains concerned by the continued application of the death penalty to a wide range of offences, including those of vague or uncertain scope, such as "spreading corruption on earth", and those that do not implicate intentional killing and therefore do not amount to the "most serious crimes."

5. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a party to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which both prohibit the execution of juvenile offenders, without exception. The Islamic Penal Code retains the death penalty for boys of at least 15 lunar years and girls of at least 9 lunar years for *qisas* (retribution in kind) or *hudud* crimes, such as homicide and

[1] The Human Rights Committee, the authoritative interpretative body under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, has established significant jurisprudence interpreting the "most serious crimes". See para. 39 of draft general comment No. 36 on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life, available at https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/GCArticle6/GCArticle6_EN.pdf.

adultery, in contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

6. The Secretary-General is alarmed by the continued execution of juvenile offenders. In 2018, Mahboubeh Mofidi, Amir Pourjafar, Ali Kazemi and Abolfazi Sharahi, aged between 14 and 16 years old at the time of their alleged commission of a crime, were executed. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued statements calling for the halting of the executions in February[2] and June 2018.[3]

7. In its submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for its most recent review, in 2016, the Government highlighted an amendment to the Penal Code in 2013 (article 91) that allowed judges to pronounce alternative sentences for juvenile offenders if there was uncertainty about their mental development at the time of the crime, or if they had not realized the nature of the crime committed (see CRC/C/IRN/Q/3-4/Add.1, paras. 30–31).

8. This amendment notwithstanding, sentencing to death and executions of juvenile offenders have continued. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed serious concern that the alternative sentences were subject to the full discretion of judges, who were allowed but not mandated to seek forensic expert opinion (see CRC/C/IRN/CO/3-4, para. 35). In some cases, the alternative sentences were overturned on appeal and a death penalty sentence was subsequently handed down. For instance, Mohammad Kalhori was 15 years old at the time of his alleged commission of a crime. During his trial at the court of first instance, the assessment of the State forensic institution attested that he was not mentally mature at the time of the alleged crime, and subsequently he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. However, following an appeal and letters by public officials, the Supreme Court overturned the sentence and he was sentenced to death during a retrial.[4]

9. The Secretary-General expresses deep concern at the continued sentencing of juveniles to death and the situation of juvenile offenders on death row, in particular Mohammad Kalhori, Mehdi Khazaeian, Mohammad Haddadi and Pouria Tabaei, following reports suggesting that their executions could be imminent. In comments provided on the present report, the Government noted that Mr. Kalhori's sentence had been upheld by the Supreme Court on 6 March, that Mr. Khazaeian's sentence had similarly been upheld pending confirmation from the Head of the Judiciary and that Mr. Haddadi's execution had been suspended by the Head of the Judiciary. The Secretary-General reiterates the call of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in his statement of 28 June 2018 for the death sentences of all those subjected to the death penalty for crimes committed when they were under 18 years of age to be commuted in line with international law.[5]

10. The Secretary-General is further concerned by the treatment of those persons on death row who have repeatedly been informed that they will be executed imminently. Mr. Sharahi was repeatedly moved into solitary confinement in preparation for his imminent execution. This occurred four times before his execution. In his statement of 28 June 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted

[2] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "Zeid urges Iran to stop violating international law by executing juvenile offenders", 16 February 2018.
[3] OHCHR, "Zeid appalled by execution of juvenile offenders in Iran", 28 June 2018.
[4] OHCHR, "United Nations experts urge Iran to halt 'unlawful execution' of young offender", 19 June 2018.
[5] OHCHR, "Zeid urges Iran to stop violating international law by executing juvenile offenders".

that, inter alia, this treatment may amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.[6]

11. Insufficient information on the timing of executions imposes a continuous anticipation of imminent death resulting in acute mental distress, not only for the convicted person but also for the person's family.[7] In this regard, a worrying trend has been observed of executions being implemented at short notice. In the case of Mr. Sharahi, his family was informed the day before his execution (see A/HRC/30/18, para. 54). Furthermore, the lack of reliable information on the timing of executions is a serious impediment to scrutiny by the international human rights system. The lack of transparency and late notice of executions underlines a broader concern about the lack of transparency in relation to individuals facing the death penalty, contrary to States' obligations (ibid., paras. 53, 54 and 58). According to information received by OHCHR, at least 85 individuals were on death row as at 1 July 2018.

12. In 2018 to date, the majority of executions were carried out following conviction for murder, referred to as *qisas*. All juvenile offenders executed in 2018 were sentenced to death pursuant to *qisas*. In such cases, the family of the victim can choose the punishment imposed, forgive the defendant or request a payment (*diya*) as compensation. The Government stated that it generally sought to "encourage reconciliation by helping the convict to pay *diya*".[8] However, *qisas* often violates the right of defendants to due process in sentencing procedures, especially in the light of mitigating circumstances, such as the age of the alleged offender, as well as the alleged offender's right to seek pardon or commutation,[9] because the pardon does not rest with the State, but with the victim's family. Notwithstanding the efforts undertaken by the authorities, the Secretary-General stresses that the State should not delegate such responsibility.

Right to a fair trial

13. In a number of cases brought to the attention of OHCHR, death sentences were handed down and/or implemented following proceedings that did not comply with fair trial and due process safeguards. The imposition of a death sentence upon the conclusion of a trial in which the provisions of article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights have not been respected constitutes a violation of the right to life.[10] Successive reports of the Secretary-General have documented such a pattern in cases concerning juvenile offenders, dual and foreign nationals, political prisoners and minorities (see A/HRC/37/24 and A/72/562). In its midterm report on the universal periodic review, the Government stated that the process for the issuance of death sentences included a preliminary verdict, referral to an appeals court, referral to the Supreme Court and review by the Chief Justice, with retrials ordered under certain conditions.[11]

14. A further recurring feature of unfair trials relates to the restriction of access to a lawyer of the defendant's choosing during the investigative phase, in contravention of article 35 of the Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political

[6] Ibid.

[7] See Human Rights Committee, *Schedko v. Belarus* (CCPR/C/77/D/886/1999), para. 10.2; and *Staselovich v. Belarus* (CCPR/C/77/D/887/1999), para. 9.2.

[8] See Islamic Republic of Iran, High Council for Human Rights, *UPR midterm* report (2015–2016) (Center for the Judiciary), p. 110. Available at https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf.

[9] See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 6 (4).

[10] See Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 32 (2007) on the right to equality before courts and tribunals and to a fair trial, para. 59; and *Shukurova v. Tajikistan* (CCPR/C/86/D/1044/2002).

[11] See Islamic Republic of Iran, *UPR midterm report* (2015–2016), p. 146.

Rights. According to article 48 of the Penal Code, individuals accused of crimes against external or internal security are required to select their counsel from a list approved by the Head of the Judiciary during the investigative phase, which is often the phase during which confessions are obtained. While article 48 entered into force in June 2015, the list of approved lawyers was only made available in June 2018. In Tehran, 20 lawyers were included in the list out of the 20,000 members of the Tehran Bar Association.

15. The Secretary-General is further concerned by death sentences passed on the basis of *Qesameh*, or "collective oath", that when other facts exist to create a doubt of innocence according to the judge, the judge can use the absence of sufficient evidence to convict a defendant of murder.[12] In such cases, the deceased's next of kin can introduce 50 family members to the Court to swear that the defendant had committed the crime — even if they did not witness the crime — which then leads to conviction. In October 2017, a man who had claimed to be innocent was executed following his conviction on the basis of *Qesameh*, and at least one juvenile offender, Saleh Shariati, was sentenced to death according to *qisas*, following application of the procedure. At the time of reporting, his case was being considered by the Supreme Court. The Secretary-General recalls that the presumption of innocence, as guaranteed by article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is fundamental to the protection of human rights and imposes on the prosecution the burden of proving the charge on the basis of evidence beyond reasonable doubt.[13]

Amendment to the drug-trafficking law

16. In November 2017, an amendment to the drug-trafficking law entered into force, which abolished the mandatory death penalty (retroactively and prospectively) for some drug-related offences in certain circumstances, replacing it with a prison term of up to 30 years. The amendment also increased the quantity of drugs required to impose a death sentence while retaining mandatory death sentences for numerous drug-related offences.

17. In his previous report, the Secretary-General welcomed the amendment (see A/HRC/37/24, para. 12). He notes that since the amendment entered into force, one report of an execution for drug-related offences has been received (in May 2018), compared with the reported executions of 231 persons for drug-related offences in 2017. The Secretary-General believes that greater public transparency on death penalty cases would assist in better assessing the impact of the amendment. United Nations human rights mechanisms have stated consistently that drug-related offences do not meet the threshold of the "most serious crimes".[14]

18. The judiciary was subsequently instructed to review the cases of those already sentenced to death for drug-related offences.[15] In July 2018, the Prosecutor of Tehran reportedly stated that 3,300 individuals sentenced to death or life imprisonment for drug-related offences had filed appeals under the amendment, and 1,700 cases had been reviewed to date. He further stated that most individuals had had their sentences amended to imprisonment following review. While this is encouraging news, concerns related to the lack of independent supervision of the review have been compounded by a reported lack of capacity of the judiciary to deal with the high

[12] See arts. 312–346 of the Islamic Penal Code.

[13] See Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 32 (2007), para. 30.

[14] See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 6 (2); CCPR/C/PAK/CO/1, para. 17; CCPR/C/THA/CO/2, para. 17; CCPR/C/KWT/CO/3, para. 22; A/71/372, para. 48; and A/HRC/21/29 and A/HRC/21/29/Corr.1, para. 24.

[15] See A/HRC/37/24, paras. 10–14; and Islamic Republic of Iran, "Circular by the Head of the Judiciary on the implementation of the new amendment to the Anti-Narcotics Law", 6 January 2018.

number of eligible pending cases and the lack of criteria to determine how cases are prioritized. There is also limited clarity on the legal assistance provided to those eligible for review. Furthermore, the sentences of some prisoners have been commuted to a standard sentence of 30 years and a fine, irrespective of the circumstances of the crime. In addition, information received by OHCHR suggests that there is no opportunity to appeal against the outcome of the review.[16] Pending the prohibition of the use of the death penalty for drug-related crimes, the Secretary-General encourages the Government to address these concerns to ensure effective legal representation for all those who have filed for review and to adhere to the principles of transparency and due process.

B. Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

19. OHCHR continued to receive numerous reports of floggings carried out in 2018, and one report of an amputation in January in Mashhad. Such practices remain prescribed as punishments for *hudud* offences under the Penal Code despite being considered by the Human Rights Committee as incompatible with article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. On 30 May, comments attributed to the Deputy Chancellor of the Judiciary praised such punishments as "much more effective" than imprisonment. The Secretary-General recalls that such punishments violate the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (see CCPR/C/79/Add.85, para. 9).

20. The Secretary-General has serious concerns about persistent reports of torture and ill-treatment in various places of detention and prisons. These reports describe beatings, denial of medical care and the use of torture or duress to coerce confessions. In its midterm report on the universal periodic review, the Government highlighted new measures put in place to ensure the health of prisoners and stated that any form of torture to acquire confession or information was forbidden, in line with article 38 of the Constitution, and that any complaint would be investigated immediately.[17]

21. Concerning reports also continue to be received about the conditions of detention in a number of facilities, including Shahr-e Rey prison (also known as Gharchak Women's Prison) and Raja'i Shahr prison, which fall short of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). Conditions at Raja'i Shahr prison received attention following the internal transfer of a number of political prisoners in August 2017 and their subsequent hunger strike protest.[18]

C. Restrictions on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association, expression and opinion and to privacy

Freedom of peaceful assembly

22. According to information published by the Ministry of the Interior, some 43,000 demonstrations have been held across the Islamic Republic of Iran since 2013.[19] On 28 December 2017, large-scale protests began in the cities of Mashhad and Neyshabur

[16] Iran Human Rights, "Iran execution trends six months after the new Anti-Narcotics Law", 29 May 2018.

[17] See Islamic Republic of Iran, *UPR mid-term report* (2015–2016), p. 157.

[18] OHCHR, "United Nations expert concerned at condition of prisoners on hunger strike in Iran", 31 August 2017.

[19] See https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-13792/.

before spreading across the country. The Minister of the Interior, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, reportedly stated that "about 100 cities witnessed protests, 42 of which experienced violence", including small towns and villages, and that demonstrations were estimated to have involved between 40,000 and 45,000 individuals.[20]

23. According to reports, popular discontent was fuelled, inter alia, by falling living standards, high inflation, widespread unemployment and perceived corruption of public officials. The publication of the government budget on 10 December 2017 had raised further concerns in relation to the allocation of public resources. In an interview, the Deputy Interior Minister for Security Affairs indicated that 90 per cent of demonstrators arrested during the protests of January 2018 were under the age of 25 years and had no criminal record.[21] According to civil society and academics, inequalities, marginalization, underinvestment and lack of access to public services in the border regions and provinces also fuelled the socioeconomic grievances of ethnic and religious minorities. In comments provided on the present report, the Government highlighted efforts to identify regional and local potential and enhance local capacities through the implementation of its sixth five-year development plan, the establishment of territorial plans for each province, engagement with Islamic councils in cities and villages and measures to facilitate free trade in border regions. The Government further noted that unilateral coercive measures constituted an impediment to economic development and highlighted their negative impact on the enjoyment of the rights to food, education, health and adequate housing, affecting all Iranians.

24. On 25 June 2018, the Government announced a ban on the import of some 1,339 products in anticipation of the reimposition of sanctions following the announcement by the United States of America of its withdrawal from Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The same day, traders in the Grand Bazaar in Tehran protested in response to the high inflation and the collapse of the national currency, the rial, by nearly 50 per cent in the unofficial market since the end of 2017. In a media interview, a parliamentarian indicated that 129 people had allegedly been arrested in the context of the demonstrations.[22] On 26 June, the Head of the Judiciary, Sadeq Larijani, stated that "these actions against the country's economic order are punishable by execution — if found to be on the level of 'corruption on earth' — or up to 20 years in prison and the confiscation of all possessions".[23]

Arrest and detention of protestors

25. OHCHR received reports of unlawful arrests, including instances of individuals detained as a means of inducing their relatives involved in demonstrations to surrender themselves to the authorities. On 1 January 2018, the judiciary called for a "strong approach from all prosecutors" in dealing with protesters. On 3 January, the head of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, Mousa Ghazanfar Abadi, threatened that protest leaders and organizers could be charged with *moharebeh*, or "enmity against God", a crime punishable by the death penalty.[24] Official news channels confirmed the arrest of around 4,970 individuals during the demonstrations in December 2017 and January 2018.[25] Members of the parliament stated that the majority of students

[20] See http://iran-newspaper.com/newspaper/item/461105.

[21] See https://www.radiofarda.com/a/28950074.html.

[22] Islamic Republic News Agency, "About 130 people arrested in illegal gatherings: MP", 1 July 2018.

[23] Radio Farda, "Prosecutor says 'a large number' of protesters arrested, threatens others", 28 June 2018.

[24] Najmeh Bozorgmehr, "Iran street protests curbed, says minister", *Financial Times*, 2 January 2018.

[25] See https://tinyurl.com/ya6gp22q.

who were arrested — some 90 students according to reports[26] — had been taken in front of their homes or university campuses to prevent further mobilization.[27] In an interview with the official Mizan news agency, the chief prosecutor of Tehran Province, Gholam Esmaili, stated that around 100 individuals had been indicted in connection with the protests.[28] In comments provided on the present report, the Government stated that the response by law enforcement officials had been proportionate and in response to the level of damage to State facilities and violence against law enforcement officers. According to the Government, 338 police officers had been injured and one killed during the protests.

26. Some individuals arrested during the January protests were reportedly interrogated and held for extended periods of time without legal representation. In some cases, detainees were transferred to unknown locations while their families were pressured not to engage with the media. According to information received by OHCHR, detained protesters have reportedly been indicted on vague charges, including *moharebeh*. Some protesters received sentences ranging from a few months to several years, following trial procedures that raised serious concerns about their adherence to international standards on due process and fair trial. In its comments on the present report, the Government stated that "a handful of individuals" had been arrested by police forces, 80 per cent of whom had been released the same day and 15 per cent a few days after. It further stated that those arrested on charges of killing or destruction of public property had been handed over to the judiciary.

27. The spokesperson of the judiciary reported that 25 people, including children and two security officers, had been killed during the protests.[29] At the time of reporting, OHCHR had not received information confirming that an independent investigation into the reported deaths of protesters had been launched. Moreover, families were not allowed to access the bodies of their family members or to hold memorial ceremonies.

28. At least five people arrested in connection with the protests of January 2018 were reported to have died while in custody, including cases from Tehran (Evin prison), Arak, Ilam and Sanandaj. The authorities claimed that some of those who died had been arrested on charges of possession of narcotics or collusion with dissident groups, and that all the deaths were suicides, contrary to reports or statements, including by officials,[30] suggesting that ill-treatment or forced administration of substances might have contributed to the deaths. Limited information was provided by the judicial authorities on the circumstances of the deaths, and reports indicated that families of some of the deceased had been pressured not to discuss their cases publicly. Some families made statements on television attesting to the fact that their loved ones had committed suicide.[31]

29. In a positive development, on 30 January a parliamentary delegation visited Evin prison following the allegations of the deaths and ill-treatment of protesters in detention.[32] On 14 February, the President, Hassan Rouhani, ordered an investigation into the allegations[33] by a committee comprising the Ministries of the Interior, Justice

[26] See https://goo.gl/mv5eMs.
[27] See https://goo.gl/RuDwYS.
[28] See http://www.mizanonline.com/fa/news/415140/.
[29] See https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran_judiciary_mohseni_ezhei_protests/28974896.html.
[30] See https://goo.gl/mb7kJf.
[31] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okHJomtg3uQ.
[32] See https://ilnanews.com/fa/tiny/news-588932.
[33] See http://www.ilna.ir/fa/tiny/news-593743.

and Intelligence.[14] As at 1 July, the results of the investigation have yet to be made public.

30. The Secretary-General is concerned about the fate of individuals who have been arrested in conjunction with the protests and who remain in custody. The Secretary-General urges the Government to ensure that the rights of all people in detention are respected and protected, and that information is made available on their location and status, in particular to their families. The Secretary-General further calls upon the Government to ensure that families are offered the possibility to seek an independent investigation into the circumstances and cause of deaths in custody. The Secretary-General notes the position of the Government in its comments that "it has always responded to the legitimate demands of its citizens, including the right to participate in political and social affairs, security and the right to peaceful assembly". The Secretary-General calls upon the Government to end widespread and serious restrictions, in law and in practice, on the right to freedom of expression, opinion, association and peaceful assembly, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/189, and also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those arrested for the legitimate exercise of these rights.

Rights to freedom of expression, association and opinion and to privacy

31. According to article 33 of the Charter on Citizens' Rights, "citizens have the right to freely and without discrimination enjoy access to and communicate and obtain information and knowledge from cyberspace".[15] In its comments on the present report, the Government noted the importance of information and communications technology and infrastructure development to enhance efficiency and bridge the technology gap with rural areas.

32. In January 2018, there were a reported 57 million Internet users in the Islamic Republic of Iran.[16] With over 40 million registered users, the messaging application Telegram became a key vehicle for communication in the country, including during the protests. It has since been subjected to significant restrictions. On 31 December 2017, the Supreme National Security Council temporarily blocked several platforms, including Telegram, in contravention of the country's Computer Crimes Law, which requires a decision by the multi-stakeholder Supreme Council of Cyberspace. In response, the Chief Executive Officer of Telegram posted on social media: "Iranian authorities are blocking access to Telegram ... after our public refusal to shut down ... other peacefully protesting channels".[17] On 9 January, eight Telegram administrators were arrested in the city of Kerman for the reports on demonstrations on their channels.

33. On 30 April, the judiciary ruled that Telegram would be permanently banned for "disrupting national unity, allowing foreign countries to spy on Iran".[18] According to multiple reports, Telegram continued to oppose the storing of the data of Internet users on servers inside the Islamic Republic of Iran, in addition to resisting the shutting down of thousands of channels.

[14] See http://www.ilna.ir/fa/tiny/news-594000.

[15] The Charter on Citizens' Rights does not contain enforcement guarantees but, according to the Government, is "tantamount to the plan and guideline of the Government for the observance and advancement of the fundamental rights of ... Iran". See http://epub.citizensrights.ir/CitizensRightsEN.pdf.

[16] Simon Kemp, "Digital in 2018: world's Internet users pass the 4 billion mark", 30 January 2018.

[17] See https://twitter.com/durov/status/947441456238735360.

[18] Reporters without Borders for Freedom of Information, "Iranian court imposes total ban on Telegram", 4 May 2018.

34. On 6 May, a group of Iranian lawyers filed a petition at a court in Tehran to overturn the order blocking Telegram, arguing that it was in contravention of article 570 of the Islamic Penal Code. The same day, in a post on social media, the President indicated that the "failure to follow legal procedures and the use of force and judicial means is the opposite of democracy",[39] and that "the filtering and blocking of Telegram was not carried out by the Government, which does not approve of it".[40]

35. In the course of 2018, the State has sought to encourage greater use of local platforms amid concerns that it may interfere with online privacy in ways that deter the exercise of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression. For example, it has been reported that Soroush, a messaging service established by companies linked to the national radio and television broadcaster, includes features enabling access by the authorities to personal details of channel administrators, such as their telephone numbers. Soroush accounts can only be accessed by holders of SIM cards that have been registered in association with a national identity document. The personal information of Internet users associated with their identity documents, including private addresses, was available on Soroush despite users not directly registering on the network.

36. Article 21 of the Computer Crimes Law, adopted in 2010, includes the requirement for Internet service providers to maintain records of Internet traffic data and personal information of Internet users, while under article 48, Internet service providers are required to record data from telephone conversations over the Internet, in violation of the right to privacy. In August 2017, the Supreme Council of Cyberspace, accountable to the office of the Supreme Leader, introduced new regulations,[41] which increased the authorities' surveillance capabilities, including through the consolidation of centralized management of the national Internet and related technology infrastructure. By creating significant obstacles for foreign and local companies to circumvent State control and censorship, these regulations affect all Internet operations in the country, further limiting the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and to access information.

37. According to information received by OHCHR, international journalists were provided with greater access to the country and increased freedom to cover issues such as social and military affairs. According to the Government, in 2017, 887 foreign correspondents from 316 media outlets travelled to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and 156 foreign media outlets and 310 foreign journalists are currently working in the country.[42]

38. However, reports of the arbitrary arrest, detention and harassment of mainly Iranian journalists and media workers and their families continued to be received. The harassment of journalists has also been directed to those covering the Islamic Republic of Iran from abroad. An injunction against over 150 former and current staff members of the British Broadcasting Corporation Persian Service remains in place (see A/HRC/37/24, para. 34, and A/HRC/37/68, para. 34). Owing to Government action, the Association of Iranian Journalists has remained closed since August 2009. The Association was established in 1997 to protect journalists' rights, including in legal or employment disputes, and had over 6,000 members (see A/HRC/37/24, para. 34).

39. In October 2016, the Government proposed a new bill, the "comprehensive mass media regulatory plan", envisaging the creation of a "media affairs commission", which would be empowered to suspend journalists if they are deemed to have violated

[39] Al Jazeera, "Iran's Rouhani condemns court order to block Telegram app", 5 May 2018.

[40] See https://www.instagram.com/p/BiXSzOEFQMF/?hl=de&taken-by=hrouhani.

[41] See http://bit.ly/2wCsbcT.

[42] See https://foreignmedia.farhang.gov.ir/fa/pressoffices.

religious principles and/or professional ethical codes. While consideration of the bill has remained dormant, there are concerns that, if enacted, the bill would give greater discretion to judges and prosecutors to determine whether an offence has been committed.

D. Groups in focus

Situation of women and girls

40. The Secretary-General is encouraged by the approval by the judicial and legal commission of the parliament on 14 May of the bill for the protection of children and adolescents, currently pending review in the plenary.[43] The Secretary-General also welcomes the introduction of the "comprehensive bill on ensuring the protection of women against violence" submitted to the parliament.[44] The bill is focused on the protection of women, the prevention of abuse, rehabilitation and ensuring improved processes in the interrogation of female offenders. The Secretary-General understands that the National Security Committee is currently reviewing a bill aimed at allowing married women to travel abroad without spousal approval, which was introduced by the Government to the parliament on 18 July 2017. He encourages the enactment of the bill.

41. The Secretary-General notes the positive developments related to the promotion of the rights and participation of women. The President appointed women to high-ranking positions, including to the posts of Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, Deputy Minister of Petroleum, Vice-President for Legal Affairs and President's Assistant for Civil Rights.[45] Despite some progress, the limited representation of women in institutions such as the parliament — with 6 per cent of seats — indicate that major impediments for the political participation of women persist.

42. Civil law denies women equal rights, including in marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance and citizenship. Discrimination continues to prevail in access to the job market. Despite major advances in women's post-secondary education, the female labour force participation in the Islamic Republic of Iran remains one of the lowest globally (17 per cent).[46] The Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified 14 International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, including the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). In its latest comments on the country, published in 2018,[47] the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations raised its concerns about persisting legal restrictions on women's access to employment, which contravene the Convention. The Civil Code allows a husband to prevent his wife from engaging in an occupation which, in his view, is incompatible with preserving the dignity or interests of the family. The Comprehensive Population and Family Excellence Plan establishes a hierarchy in hiring practices, which would give rise to discrimination against women on the basis of sex and marital and family status. The Government noted in its comments that the Plan is to be developed further.

43. Figures published by the Statistical Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran in March 2018 indicated that 41 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 29 years

[43] Islamic Republic of Iran, *UPR mid-term report (2015–2016)*.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Bank, "Labor force participation rate, female (per cent of female population ages 15+) (modeled ILO estimate)", ILOSTAT database. Available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS.

[47] ILO, Normlex. Available at http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11110:::NO:::.

were unemployed.[48] The highest unemployment rates were found in provinces most populated by ethnic and religious minorities, where women face intersectional discrimination. According to a report published by the Islamic Parliament Research Centre in December 2017, the unemployment rate among female graduates in provinces such as Kordestan, Kermanshah and Kerman was 80 per cent. Commenting on the present report, the Government noted that the Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs had required governors to adopt a "provincial document on the promotion of women".

44. According to information received by OHCHR, on 8 March, protestors held a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to protest against gender-based discrimination in hiring and at the workplace. According to the Government, the demonstration was held in the absence of relevant permits. Fifty-nine women and 25 men were arrested for participating in the demonstration. While the majority of those arrested were released the following day, 19 demonstrators were transferred to the Fashafiyah and Gharchak prisons, 14 of whom were charged with "acting against national security". By 19 March, most had been released on bail.

45. Child marriage remains a serious concern that has been raised repeatedly by international human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2016. The legal age for marriage under the Civil Code is 13 years for girls and 15 years for boys. Girls can be married as young as 9 years old with the permission of a court. Quoting figures from Statistical Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran,[49] the head of the Women's Fraction in the parliament stated on 8 March that during the previous year (March 2016 to March 2017) 37,000 girls under 15 years of age had been married, while 2,000 had been divorced or had become widows in the same period.

46. Repressive and discriminatory rules concerning the dress code for women and girls continue to be enforced. Women who do not wear a hijab in public can be sentenced to up to two months in prison or be fined. According to a survey conducted in 2014 and published by the Office of the President in February 2018, half of Iranians indicated that they were in favour of lifting the requirement of compulsory hijab.[50] The number of women who have publicly supported the online campaign against compulsory veiling, "My Stealthy Freedom",[51] or of those who gave support to the online "#whitewednesday" social media campaign protesting against the policy continued to grow. On 27 December 2017, a wave of protests known as the "Girls of Revolution Street" began after Vida Movahed was arrested for taking off and waving her hijab on a stick in public in Tehran. She was reportedly detained incommunicado for several weeks, leading to a new wave of social media posts using the hashtag #Whereisshe? On 28 January, she was released on bail.

47. On 1 February, 29 people were arrested for their involvement in the "My Stealthy Freedom" campaign. Some faced charges of "a sinful act", "violating public decency" or "encouraging immorality or prostitution",[52] which can carry a sentence of 10 years of imprisonment. Most were released on bail. Some female protesters were subsequently sentenced to up to two years in prison on the charge of "encouraging moral corruption". OHCHR received reports of cases of female protestors who were injured during their arrest as a result of the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials.

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[48] See https://www.amar.org.ir/Portals/1/releases/LFS_Year_1396.pdf.

[49] See https://www.amar.org.ir/english/.

[50] Thomas Erdbrink, "Compulsory veils? Half of Iranians say 'no' to pillar of revolution", *New York Times*, 4 February 2018.

[51] See http://mystealthyfreedom.net/en/.

[52] See https://goo.gl/uqVfRx.

48. Judicial officials have publicly condemned the protests as having been instigated by foreign influence. On 7 March, the Prosecutor of Tehran, Abbas Dolatabadi, qualified the protests as "unobtrusive", yet contrary to Islamic values and motivated by the content of social networks.[53] The chief prosecutor of Tehran Province, Gholam Esmaili, stated that the protests should be "treated with decisiveness", describing them as having been instigated by "enemies of Islam".[54]

49. The Secretary-General is concerned by the response of judicial authorities to the protests against compulsory hijab. As documented by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, the enforcement of such a dress code on women violates their freedom of religion and belief, in terms of their freedom from being forced to wear or display religious symbols (see E/CN.4/2006/5, paras. 52 and 60, and A/HRC/7/10/Add.1, para. 126).

Situation of human rights defenders, activists and political prisoners

50. The Secretary-General remains deeply concerned about the situation of human rights defenders and activists who have been imprisoned in connection with their activities.

51. Since issuance of the previous report, Narges Mohammadi, Arash Sadeghi, Soheil Arabi, Mohammad Ali Taheri and Atena Daemi all remain imprisoned despite continued calls for their release.[55] The Secretary-General is further disturbed by reports published in June that Mr. Arabi was beaten by other inmates at Great Tehran Penitentiary and Ms. Mohammadi was hospitalized owing to her health further deteriorating. Commenting on the present report, the Government stated that Mr. Arabi was in good health and that Ms. Mohammadi had access to ongoing medical care. In May, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention expressed grave concern for the welfare of Mr. Sadeghi, a student activist, and rendered an opinion that his detention was arbitrary and calling for his release (see A/HRC/WGAD/2018/19). In comments provided, the Government stated that Mr. Sadeghi had access to appropriate care in prison.

52. In March, special procedures expressed concern at the treatment of women human rights defenders Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee, and called for their release.[56]

53. In January, Kavous Seyed-Emami, the head of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, was arrested in Tehran along with six staff members of the Foundation. They were accused of gathering classified information under the guise of environmental projects. In February, Mr. Seyed-Emami was found dead in Evin prison. The authorities claimed he committed suicide, which was questioned by his family and non-governmental organizations. As of July 2018, the whereabouts of the other detained environmentalists remained unknown, while more environmentalists have been detained since May. Subsequently, the wife of Mr. Seyed-Emami, Maryam Mombeini, was prevented from leaving the Islamic Republic of Iran, her passport was confiscated, and she was subjected to repeated interrogations and suffered health complications.[57] In comments provided on the present report, the Government indicated that the cases of those detained had not yet led to the issuance of a verdict.

[53] See https://goo.gl/uqVfRx.

[54] See https://goo.gl/pXTN5e.

[55] See A/HRC/WGAD/2017/48, A/HRC/WGAD/2018/19 and OHCHR, "Death sentence on *alternative health practitioner* highlights alarming use of capital punishment in Iran — Zeid", 5 August 2015.

[56] OHCHR, "United Nations experts alarmed by reports of human rights defenders beaten in Iran jail", 19 March 2018.

[57] Center for Human Rights in Iran, "Widow hospitalized after IRGC storms home of Iranian Canadian who died in Iranian State custody", 27 June 2018.

54. The Secretary-General is concerned that recent arrests and the treatment of lawyers risk undermining the right to an effective defence and the administration of justice. On 13 June, Nasrin Sotoudeh, a prominent human rights lawyer, was arrested and transferred to Evin prison following her representation of women who had protested against compulsory veiling. Reports indicate that she will face charges related to national security on the basis of allegations that she had colluded with some of the protestors against the State.[58] Another lawyer, Zeinab Taheri, was also arrested directly after the execution of her client, Mohammad Salas, for publicly revealing details of the case.[59] In March, an imprisoned human rights lawyer, Abdolfattah Soltani, began a hunger strike amid concerns for his deteriorating health after learning that his request for the judicial review of his sentence had been denied.[60] Commenting on the present report, the Government stated that lawyers operated freely in the country and that the arrest of Ms. Sotoudeh was in implementation of a previously issued sentence.

55. In 2018 to date, OHCHR has continued to receive reports of reprisals against individuals and their families, including confiscation of passports, threats and intimidation through subjection to repeated interrogations. In particular, the Secretary-General reiterates his concern at the treatment of Raheleh Rahemipor, the sister of Hossein Rahemipor, whose case was reviewed by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in 2017. Ms. Rahemipor was sentenced to imprisonment for "spreading propaganda against the system" but was released on bail pending appeal (see A/HRC/36/31, para. 37). In May, however, new charges were brought against her. The Secretary-General reiterates the right of family members, including Ms. Rahemipor, to seek clarification of the fate of their loved ones without retaliation. In its comments on the present report, the Government stated that sanctions were not applied for solely communicating with the human rights mechanisms, and that Ms. Rahemipor was tried for allegedly committing abusive acts related to making allegations about the fate of her imprisoned family member and organizing a protest rally.

Arbitrary arrests and detention of dual nationals

56. The Secretary-General remains concerned about the situation of imprisoned dual and foreign nationals in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including Ahmadreza Djalali; Siamak and Baquer Namazi; Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe; Kamal Foroughi; Karan Vafadari and his wife, Afarin Neyssari; Xiyue Wang; and Nizar Zakka. Recent reports raised concern for the mental and physical health of a number of the aforementioned individuals, including Mr. Djalali, who reportedly has suffered serious health complications recently. He was sentenced to death in October 2017 on the charge of "corruption on earth".[61] In January, an application for judicial review of the sentence was dismissed without explanation. The Secretary-General reiterates the call of special procedures of the Human Rights Council in February 2017 to annul Mr. Djalali's death sentence[62] and in December 2017 to release him in the light of his

[58] Human Rights Watch, "Iran: prominent rights defender arrested — judiciary targets acclaimed human rights lawyer", 13 June 2018.

[59] Amnesty International, "Iran: outspoken lawyer arrested after protesting the execution of her client", 20 June 2018.

[60] Iran Human Rights Monitor, "Iran: imprisoned human rights activist Abdulfatah Soltani starts hunger strike", 26 March 2018.

[61] OHCHR, "United Nations rights experts call on Iran to annul death sentence against academic and free him", 20 December 2017, and "United Nations rights experts urge Iran to annul death sentence against Ahmadreza Djalali", 9 February 2018.

[62] OHCHR, "United Nations rights experts urge Iran to annul death sentence against Ahmadreza Djalali".

arbitrary detention (see A/HRC/WGAD/2017/92). In its comments on the present report, the Government noted that Mr. Djalali had refused to be transferred to hospital.

Situation of ethnic and religious minorities

57. The Government stated that fundamental rights are recognized for all Iranian citizens regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation, in compliance with articles 13, 19 and 20 of the Constitution. In 2018 to date, OHCHR has continued to receive reports [63]describing discrimination faced by ethnic and religious minorities, including denial of access to university and to employment opportunities, discriminatory access to basic services, such as health care, and underrepresentation in public affairs, including at the city council level. Restrictions placed upon the use of minority languages and cultural practices, including in primary and secondary education, continued in contravention of article 15 of the Constitution and possibly also in violation of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. OHCHR also received multiple reports of incitement of hatred against the Baha'i and Azerbaijani Turkish communities. Reports further indicate that members of minority groups constitute the majority of political prisoners in the Islamic Republic of Iran and a disproportionate percentage of persons executed on political and national security-related charges.[64]

58. In February 2018, special procedures issued a public statement expressing concern at jail sentences of between 10 and 15 years imposed on Pastor Victor Bet Tamraz, Amin Afshar Naderi and Hadi Asgari for, inter alia, allegedly "conducting evangelism" and "illegal house church activities", which, according to the authorities, amount to acting against national security.[65] All have been released on bail and are appealing their sentences. The son and wife of Pastor Tamraz were also charged with acting against national security. Commenting on the present report, the Government indicated that the cases were being considered by the appeals court.

59. In June 2017, Ramin Panahi was arrested for alleged membership of the Kurdish nationalist group Komala and was sentenced to death on charges of "taking up arms against the State". Special procedures issued statements calling for the annulment of his conviction in the light of reports of torture in detention and unfair trial.[66] OHCHR also received reports concerning the health and treatment of Kurdish prisoners Zanyar Moradi and Loghman Moradi, who were sentenced to death in 2009 on the basis of confessions made following alleged beating. Similarly, OHCHR received information regarding the health of Zeynab Jalalian, who is serving a life sentence following her arrest in 2007 for alleged membership in a prohibited Kurdish opposition group.[67]

60. In February 2018, several hundred Gonabadi dervishes participated in a public protest in Tehran. Reports indicate that 300 persons were arrested, half of whom were later transferred to hospital for treatment, some allegedly having been subjected to severe beatings while in detention, which led to the death of one of the protesters while in custody.[68] During the protests, two protestors and five security agents were

[63] See, for example, Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights and Minority Rights Group International, *Rights Denied: Violations against ethnic and religious minorities in Iran* (London, Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights and Minority Rights Group International, 2018).

[64] See https://ipa.united4iran.org/en/prisoner/.

[65] OHCHR, "Iran must ensure rights of Christian minority and fair trial for the accused — United Nations experts", 2 February 2018.

[66] OHCHR, "Iran must halt execution of Ramin Hossein Panahi, say United Nations rights experts", 18 June 2018.

[67] See also A/HRC/37/68, para. 73.

[68] Center for Human Rights in Iran, "Dozens of Gonabadi dervishes hospitalized in Tehran as Friday prayer leaders demand harsh retribution", 26 February 2018.

reportedly killed, including three police officers who were run over by a bus. Subsequently, Mohammad Salas, who belongs to the minority group, was reportedly interrogated without a lawyer, tortured and forced to sign a confession with regard to the murders. Despite later retracting his confession, he was sentenced to death and executed on 18 June. The Secretary-General remains deeply concerned about the fate and treatment of those still in detention, and calls for respect for their rights, including the right to fair trial and the absolute prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

III. Cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

A. Cooperation with human rights treaty bodies

61. The Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified six core international human rights treaties and is a signatory to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The Secretary-General welcomes the enhanced cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the treaty bodies and notes the Government's declared intention to submit periodic reports. He encourages the Government to submit its reports under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which have been overdue since 2014 and 2013, respectively, and under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, due in May 2018.

B. Cooperation with the universal periodic review

62. The Secretary-General encourages the Government to pursue a dialogue on the implementation of recommendations made during the universal periodic review on 31 October 2014 (see A/HRC/28/12 and A/HRC/28/12/Corr.1). He welcomes the establishment by the Government of a national committee comprising more than 40 entities in the preparation of its voluntary midterm report, covering the period from April 2015 to December 2016.[69] The Secretary-General encourages Iranian authorities, as outlined by the Government in its midterm report, to implement its "decision ... made, based on the Paris Principles, in the session of the High Council for Human Rights chaired by the Chief Justice as the Chair of the Council, in January 2016, to establish a national institution for human rights". The Secretary-General further encourages Iranian authorities and institutions to engage with OHCHR in the third cycle of the universal periodic review, scheduled for November 2019.

C. Cooperation with special procedures

63. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Asma Jahangir, who passed away in February, was presented to the Human Rights Council in March (see A/HRC/37/68), along with the comments of the State (A/HRC/37/68/Add.1). Since that time, special procedures of the Council have continued to engage with the Government. In 2018 to date, they have issued nine communications, two of which were replied to by the Government, and have also issued 11 public statements. The Secretary-General notes that the Council renewed

[69] Islamic Republic of Iran, *UPR mid-term report (2015–2016)*.

the mandate of the Special Rapporteur in March 2018 (see Council resolution 37/30), and welcomes comments made by the Government indicating that it intends to engage with the Special Rapporteur. He further encourages the Government to invite the Special Rapporteur to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran.

D. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

64. The Secretary-General welcomes the engagement of OHCHR and dialogue on human rights with Iranian officials, including the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations in Geneva, the High Council for Human Rights and delegations visiting Geneva. OHCHR also intervened several times on behalf of juvenile offenders at risk of execution to call for an immediate halt to the implementation of their death sentences.

IV. Recommendations

65. **On the basis of the observations made in the present report, the Secretary-General makes the below recommendations to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.**

66. **The Secretary-General reiterates his call upon the Government to prohibit the execution of juvenile offenders in all circumstances and to commute their sentences. He urges the Government to abolish the mandatory death penalty and to introduce a moratorium on its use. Pending the introduction of a moratorium, legal guarantees and safeguards should be established, including respect for international due process and fair trial standards, notably with regard to the right to legal assistance at all stages of the proceedings and the abolition of *Qesameh*. Pending the introduction of a moratorium, existing legislation should be reviewed to ensure that the death penalty is only imposed for the "most serious crimes", that is, those involving intentional killing. Transparency concerning the numbers of persons who have been sentenced to death and executed — and for which crimes — should be ensured. Prompt notification about the date and place of executions should be provided, and access to reliable information on the death penalty should be guaranteed.**

67. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to repeal laws authorizing the use of torture and ill-treatment as a form of punishment, to ensure that prompt, thorough and effective investigations are undertaken by independent and impartial bodies into all deaths in custody and reports of torture or other ill-treatment and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.**

68. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to ensure the mental and physical integrity of all detainees and to permit access to all places of detention for independent national and international monitoring organizations.**

69. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to ensure that international standards and guarantees of due process and fair trial are met, including by ensuring that all defendants, including those who are accused of crimes against the internal and external security of the State, are assured access to counsel of their choosing during the preliminary investigative stage and all subsequent stages of the judicial process.**

70. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and environmentalists can perform their roles safely and freely, without fear of harassment, arrest, detention and prosecution,**

and to release all those detained solely for legitimately and peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

71. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to repeal laws that criminalize or unduly restrict freedom of expression online, to ensure that online content is only restricted pursuant to a decision by an independent and impartial judicial authority in accordance with due process and to revoke decisions that enable the monitoring or filtering of content which are inconsistent with the right to privacy.**

72. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to amend and repeal laws and practices that discriminate against women and girls, in accordance with international standards, and to ensure that the rights of women human rights defenders and protestors are protected.**

73. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to protect the rights of all persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities and to address all forms of discrimination against them, and to immediately and unconditionally release all those imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief.**

74. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to ensure that all individuals whose rights have been violated are afforded an effective remedy, to ensure prompt, thorough and effective investigations by independent and impartial bodies of allegations of violations and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.**

75. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.**

76. **The Secretary-General calls upon the Government to continue to cooperate and follow up on the concluding observations of all treaty bodies and special procedures mechanisms.**

77. **The Secretary-General encourages the Government to continue its constructive engagement with OHCHR on the follow-up to all recommendations made in the present and previous reports, and those of international human rights mechanisms, including the universal periodic review.**